

## "GIVE US MORE LIGHT!"

Address to the Kuklos Club, Montreal,  
BY JAMES RUSSELL, Hudson, P.Q.

### I.

My theme is LIGHT; whereof, oh! learned few,  
Ye each are living particles; or rather links.  
Tis no misnomer "KUKLOS;" 'tis doubly true,  
And marvelously appropriate, methinks!  
For literature is Light; such light as Shakespeare lit,  
Dante, or Burns, thank God, is shining yet!

First: I behold your light of intellectual fire.  
The light of Reason round you streaming;  
Then deeper light, oh! lover, husband, sire,  
From lustrous eyes around your circle beaming!

### II.

"Give us more Light!" be this your ceaseless prayer  
And constant watchword, ever ready:  
Inscribe it o'er your archives fair.  
Use it with purpose firm, and steady.  
While for knowledge ye are toiling,  
Lo! the slaves of Gold are moiling  
With chaotic, dire commotion.  
On the earth and on the ocean;  
With the sordid sweat and clamour,  
With the smiting axe and hammer.  
And o'er shares and markets fretting,  
Dead to aught, save money-getting!  
Knowing naught but money gain  
With the fever-pulse of pain.  
Vive l'Amour! Bonds-men all!  
Light! Give us more light; be this your call.  
Ye of Kuklos, one and all!

### III.

Light! in those fertile paths of heavenly lore  
Wherein it is your love to linger!  
On those high levels where ye soar,  
When Art or Genius point the finger:  
While Toil's hardy sons are earning  
Bread with cunning hand, yet learning  
Crafts that make the nations stronger.  
Earning exiles to honour—longer  
Than old proud calvaire glory.  
Herabry emblazoned, hoary,  
Vanished of by crest and motto  
On escutcheon, shield and chateau!  
Woe and carnage, strife and din.  
When the Might, not Right, doth win.  
Vive l'Amour! Toilers all!  
Light! Give us more light; be this your call.  
Ye of Kuklos, one and all!

### IV.

Light! on those deathless trophies of great arts  
From marble and from canvas glowing,  
To shed their impress on your hearts,  
Their charms of hand and brain bestowing:  
Shades of Vandyke and Cellini,  
Grand as Socrates or Plato  
In their own domains of grandeur.  
In their own domains of splendour!  
Light! more light, to bring them nearer,  
Trace their wondrous outlines clearer.  
Light! wherein ye may discover  
Genius of genius, boys for ever!  
Measure arch and shaft and dome,  
Walk with Angelo in Rome!  
Painters, sculptors, bingers all!  
More light! more light! be this your call.  
Ye of Kuklos, one and all!

### V.

Light! to illumine the broad historic page,  
To point the rubric of her story,  
To trace the errors of the age,  
And tell the shame and the glory!  
While de-potic plots are breeding,  
While the cause of Right lies bleeding,  
Lusting kings o'er subject minions  
Dunning bread and free opinions,  
Nations, empires rising, falling,  
Changes startling, vast appalling!  
Conclaves, treaties dark, mysterious:  
Edicts tyrannous, imperious:  
Things of Church, and Court and State,  
Of pride and pomp; chance and fate!  
Vive l'Amour! Statesmen all!  
Light! give us more light, be this your call.  
Ye of Kuklos, one and all!

### VI.

Light! on the page of biographic lore  
To point each moral of life's story,  
Those springs of action to explore  
Leading Pitt to fame, Wolfe to glory.  
The depths and shallows to descry  
Of each eventful history,  
Clogs to fortune and to progress,  
Clogs to genius, art, and goodness;  
Freaks of frenzy, wit, and madness,  
Freaks of caprice, mirth and sadness;  
Whims of fancy, sin, and folly,  
Inspiration, melancholy!  
Light! to point a pathway straight  
Upward to great Wisdom's gate!  
Vive l'Amour! Learners all!  
Light! still more light, be this your call.  
Ye of Kuklos, one and all!

### VII.

Light! on the footprints of the heaven-born muse,  
And round your pathway, ye who soar,  
And Poesy's pure light diffuse.  
"The light that never was on sea nor shore!"  
Oh! ye, who thus are journeying  
On lyric, or on epic wing,  
From the fabled Pierian fountain,  
Up the Promethean mountain!  
Unto altitudes and portals  
Whence descend your songs to mortals,  
Whence descend like wreaths of myrtle,  
Songs upon the Kuklos Circle!  
Invoke your powers of rhyme  
From those altitudes sublime;  
With your lyre of potent might  
Sing the coming Age of Light!  
Vive l'Amour! Rhymer all!  
Light! "give us more light!" be this your call,  
Ye of Kuklos, one and all!

This very clever poem was read amid much  
appreciative at the last weekly meeting of the  
Kuklos Club, and a vote of thanks was passed  
to the author.

## TWO TRAGEDIES IN REAL LIFE.

The Hotel S. formerly occupied an imposing  
space on the English Quay in St. Petersburg,  
and was the sumptuous abode of General S.,  
a distinguished officer high in favour with the  
reigning emperor Paul I.

The general had served in the Turkish, Polish,  
and Swedish wars, and been rewarded with  
estates in several provinces in Russia. He had  
now retired on his laurels, and having been long  
a widower with an only daughter as the heir to  
a great wealth, his one object was to provide

her with a husband of suitable rank, who was  
likely to continue the good reputation which her  
father had always borne among his countrymen.

Natalie S. had been allowed to express her  
opinion much more freely than was usually per-  
mitted to young ladies in Russia, as to the  
various suitors whom the General commended to  
her notice. None had pleased her hitherto, and  
as her father was not accustomed to be dis-  
obeyed by any one except his daughter, he began  
to lose patience, and to threaten her with a tem-  
porary sojourn in a convent unless she looked  
favourably on the attentions of a certain Count  
V., who was very rich, and held an office at the  
court.

The revolution of 1793 had lately compelled  
all the French aristocracy to fly from their own  
country; and as the conservative policy of the  
czars was congenial to those who had supported  
the ancient régime in France, they came in great  
numbers to St. Petersburg, and made themselves  
vastly at home in the drawing-rooms of that fri-  
volous city. In fact, the Russians were begin-  
ning to be very tired of them. They thought  
that one sovereign was quite enough to be main-  
tained by one poor state; and now there was  
also Louis XVIII. living in Courland on a  
pension from the czar of 25,000*l.* a year, and the  
Prince de Condé installed in a palace in St.  
Petersburg, where he was supplied with a royal  
guard, and treated in all respects like a king.  
The late czarina had expended two millions  
upon the French emigrants, and her son seemed  
to place no limit to his prodigality on their be-  
half. Then it was not pleasant, if a Russian  
officer's duties obliged him to arrive late at a ball,  
to find every young lady engaged by these gay  
cavaliers, who had nothing else to do but to  
dance and to flirt, and who poured the tale of  
their sufferings and hazardous escapes into only  
too-sympathising ears. The Russians quite  
wished to ally themselves with their common  
enemy—the French Republic—in order to get  
rid of them. General S. was of this opinion,  
and could not speak with any tolerance of the  
French royalists.

It, however, happened one evening that young  
Natalie went to a ball, chaperoned by an elderly  
but indiscreet relative; and her father was to  
join them in the course of the night to take her  
home. What was his displeasure when, on en-  
tering the room, he saw his only child, the pride  
of his heart, in the embraces—for it looked just  
like it—of a young French emigre, who was  
whirling her along in the dance then just intro-  
duced from Poland, and looked very shyly at by  
all careful duennas, but which now meets with  
common approval under the name of the waltz!

He could hardly conceal his indignation, but  
took the earliest opportunity to convey her  
away. Natalie wept, and entreated forgiveness.  
The young man had been introduced to her by  
a mutual acquaintance; he belonged to the  
highest French noblesse, and from owning grand  
large estates and a grand castle, now possessed  
literally nothing he could call his own, except  
the clothes he wore. His father and elder  
brother had died on the guillotine—martyrs in the  
cause of royalty. But his poverty, though it  
excited her interest, did not commend him the  
more to the General, who saw that he had made  
a much deeper impression on Natalie than he at  
all approved. He peremptorily forbade her ever  
to see him again, and sent a message to the  
Frenchman, that if by any chance he caught  
him seeking an interview, he should take prompt  
measures to have him quickly expelled from  
Russia.

Two days afterwards Natalie was sitting with  
her embroidery at the window of her boudoir  
over-looking the Neva. Her father had gone to  
the daily parade of the troops, which was equi-  
valent to an imperial levee; and she was per-  
haps reflecting that existence was rather dull,  
kept as closely to the house as a Turkish dame,  
and thinking of what the Frenchman had told  
her of the liberty permitted to young married  
women in Warsaw and Paris, when she heard a  
knock at the door, and who should appear but  
her partner of that unfortunate night! She  
started and turned pale. "You need not be  
alarmed," he said. "I have bribed Ivan (the  
porter) to give me early notice of the old gen-  
tleman's return, and to keep him downstairs on  
some pretext while I take my leave." Then fol-  
lowed a conversation of the light and agreeable  
nature in which young Frenchmen excel, and  
which to Natalie, living alone with a stern mili-  
tary father, and too well educated to seek com-  
panions among the sets who frequented their house-  
hold, had all the charm of novelty. Perhaps  
she did not discourage him (though this point is  
not clear) when he bade her farewell, with the  
assurance that he should come again; and he  
did not refuse a splendid jewel which she pressed  
into his hand, to relieve his present pecuniary  
embarrassment.

The next morning the General had only just  
set off to the parade as young Achille de Ligny  
appeared at the door of the boudoir; but the  
French emigre had hardly talked five minutes to  
Natalie before a noise was heard on the staircase.  
It was her father coming back to give her a  
direction he had forgotten about the dress she  
was to wear that evening at the court, when for  
the first time she was to be presented to the em-  
press. Not a moment was to be lost in hurrying  
Achille out of sight; but where was he to go?  
There was a large ottoman in the room with a  
heavy lock. He raised the lid with Natalie's  
assistance, and sprang into it, and she had  
scarcely closed it tightly upon him when her  
father entered.

The General looked suspiciously round, and  
told Natalie he wished to open that ottoman.

She showed him it was locked, and made a feint  
to find the key, which she had slipped into her  
pocket. He seemed satisfied, when her search  
was fruitless, and sat down upon it, while for a  
quarter of an hour he went into minute details  
as to her dress, the elaborate court etiquette to  
be observed, and the precedence of the members  
of the imperial family, to whom she was to make  
her curtsy in turn. His dog, who was with him,  
howled incessantly, notwithstanding several  
blows from the hilt of his master's sword, till at  
last rising, the general kissed his daughter and  
hurried off to the parade.

Then she again breathed freely, and with  
trembling hands unlocked the ottoman, and  
tried to open it; but it was beyond her powers.  
A cold shudder came over her as she heard no  
sound, and the time was passing, and her father  
might return. At last, in her despair, she called  
her maid, a young serf-girl named Vera, and  
their united strength forced up the lid; but, oh,  
horror! it disclosed a livid face, and a body  
curled in the convulsive agony which is the pre-  
cursor of sudden death. The resistance had  
been caused by the head having come in contact  
with the hasp, which was of an antique Russian  
shape, fastening inside, and the dying groans  
had been drowned by the noise of the General's  
dog. Achille had expired of suffocation, and  
the whole Medical College in St. Petersburg  
could not have restored life to his stiffening  
frame.

Natalie's first feeling was of grief for him,  
then, perhaps not unnaturally, of alarm for her-  
self. The law of Russia made those responsible  
for a corpse who were found nearest to it when  
it was discovered. No distinction was made be-  
tween murder and homicide, and the penalties  
at the time were very severe. It was not an un-  
known thing for a young and delicate woman,  
with her tongue cut out, to suffer death from the  
knot, publicly administered by a common ex-  
ecutioner. Vera quite entered into her mistress's  
fears. It was manifest that the corpse could not  
remain there; it must be removed; but how  
was this to be done without letting her father  
hear of it, which Natalie dreaded even more  
than death!

Vera was engaged to marry a soldier, and she  
undertook that he should put it out of the way,  
with the help of a comrade, if Natalie would in-  
duce her father to obtain his discharge from  
the army, and to give Vera her freedom, which  
could alone enable her to marry a free man. Na-  
talie promised everything, and was obliged the  
same evening to attend the court with the  
ghastly image of young Achille haunting her at  
every step. The compliments poured into her  
ears were disregarded. She danced with the  
two young grand-dukes, the elder of whom was  
esteemed the most elegant man of his time. She  
received a gracious smile from the empress, but  
was indifferent to everything. Returned home,  
she glanced from the window across the  
frozen river, darkly shrouded in the midst  
of a moonless night. In the distance she  
discerned two figures dragging a third between  
them, and, lighted by a torch, she saw them  
make a hole with a pickaxe in the ice, and thrust  
something beneath it. She withdrew sick at  
heart, and would have breathed a prayer for the  
soul of the dead man, launched without shrift  
or requiem on the river of death; but the words  
claved to her lips, and she could not utter them,  
though she hoped some day to make an offering  
to a monastery to cause a mass to be said for  
him, and to dedicate a church to his patron  
saint.

Vera was freed by her master at Natalie's  
urgent request, and was married to the soldier,  
whose discharge was obtained. The General,  
perhaps, wondered at his daughter's filial devo-  
tion to himself, which had suddenly become so  
marked as easily to win from him these favours.  
She even seemed more kindly disposed to Count  
V., and condescended to accept the jewels he  
lavished upon her, though he was often surprised  
that she never put them on. Vera's husband  
had, however, become a perfect horse-leech, con-  
stantly asking for money. He spent the whole  
day in public-houses; and Natalie disposed of  
one trinket after another to enable him to drink  
and to buy his silence. Day after day the mes-  
sage reached the wretched girl that a young  
woman wanted to speak to her; and there she  
saw Vera, often in tears, sent by her husband to  
extort another present by threats. At last mat-  
ters came to a crisis. The ex-soldier, even more  
tipsy than usual, boasted one evening to his  
serf-companions that the lady would come her-  
self at his demand and hand him a pot of beer.  
A heavy wager was laid, and he sent Vera to in-  
form Natalie that he expected her to wait upon  
him to enable him to gain the bet.

Natalie had long been pondering over some  
way of ridding herself of this vulgar tyrant; and  
now he had almost pointed it out to her. It was  
not difficult to obtain poison, for the rats were  
troublesome in the houses near the Neva, and  
there was always a supply kept in the house for  
them. Wrapped up in a huge fur cloak, she  
followed Vera to the low and noisy den, where  
the scene of dissipation was the more repulsive  
from its coarseness and brutality. Calm and ex-  
pressionless as a stone, she bought a pot of beer,  
and handed it through the dense smoky atmos-  
phere of the dingy squalid building to the in-  
ebriated peasant. She then quietly returned home,  
and in less than an hour he died.

It was a reign in which Justice, after a long  
doze, had begun to shake herself, and deal her  
blows with an unsparring hand alike on lord and  
peasant. If Natalie had possessed a confidante  
in high life, the crime might nevertheless have  
been suppressed and the police bribed; but as

no measures were taken to that effect, it became  
known, and even reached the ears of the emper-  
or. Paul sent for General S., and received him  
in a private audience.

"I have heard," he said, "of the terrible  
event which has happened in your family; but  
I can remember nothing but your great services  
to the State. It must, however, be clear to you  
that your daughter has now only one course be-  
fore her—to retire for life into a convent."

Natalie lost no time in obeying this injunc-  
tion, and eventually took the vows of a nun.  
Her father's wealth was bequeathed to charities,  
and an expiatory chapel was built on each of his  
former estates.

The emperor's commutation of a penalty was,  
in this case, universally approved. It averted a  
scandal from a noble family, and the privileged  
classes asked if it would have been right that a  
lady should suffer for the murder of a peasant,  
even though he were a freed man.

A similar act of favour ten years later, though  
under another emperor (Alexander I.), did not  
meet with the same unanimous verdict, but then  
it was bestowed on the actor in a tragedy entirely  
connected with humble life.

A farmer's wife of the name of Catherine had  
been for a night to a fair in the nearest town,  
her sledge (for it was midwinter) being packed  
with goods to sell. She took with her a boy of  
five years old and an infant of sixteen months,  
whom she kept closely covered up on her lap  
under her sheep-skin cloak. On her return she  
had twenty miles to drive along a very lonely  
track, bordered part of the way by a thick forest.  
The ground was carpeted with frozen snow, along  
which the horse flew rapidly, when she saw in  
the distance a dark mass advancing towards her,  
and at once recognised it as a pack of wolves.  
These animals, in severe weather and pressed by  
hunger, used to be the scourge of some of the  
remote country districts in Russia. They kept  
gaining upon her, and a trace breaking, gave  
them time, while she was repairing it, to sur-  
round the sledge. The horse kicked furiously,  
the children clung to her, and she felt her  
clothes already in their mouths, when a chance  
of escape seemed to occur to her, and she flung  
the boy into the midst of the pack; one moment  
was enough to complete the fastenings of the  
trace, and she drove on.

The wolves, having stopped to devour the  
child, again came after her, and again one  
had almost leapt into the sledge. If she perished  
the infant must also; and it seemed inevitable.  
Why should both die when the death of one  
might suffice? She tore it from her and threw  
it on to the snow to appease her pursuers, and  
the few minutes that it detained them enabled  
her to reach her home.

She entered the courtyard with a wild and  
scared expression, and the foaming horse, with  
bespattered harness, seemed equally terrified.  
The household assembled outside to hear her  
story, and a young serf who was chopping wood  
stopped with his axe poised in mid-air while she  
told the appalling details. He came towards her.  
"Then you could find it in your heart," he said,  
"to throw the lovely little Fedor to the wolves?"  
—"I was forced to do it," she answered.—"And  
the sweet little Nina," he added, "your own  
baby?"—"I did," she replied. His axe de-  
scended on her head, and she fell down lifeless.

Directly the young man saw what he had done,  
he flew for water to try to restore her, and then  
a doctor, but life was gone. He made no attempt  
to conceal his act; it had been done before  
many witnesses, and he was arrested and  
thrown into prison, where, after the usual pro-  
ceedings, he was condemned to receive twenty-  
five strokes with the knout, which, in fact,  
meant certain death. His sister Lisa made a  
melancholy expedition to the town where he was  
to be tried, and there she obtained access to the  
priest attached to the prison, and from him  
learned the sentence. All St. Petersburg had  
been moved to try to obtain a pardon for a noble-  
man who had turned wrecker and caused the  
loss of many vessels with all their crews, but  
there was no one to plead for this miserable  
serf; and even the humane, on hearing of it,  
said, "Well at least he struck a woman, and so  
deserves to die." Lisa asked the priest if there  
was a chance of the emperor (who reserved to  
himself the privilege of signing death-warrants)  
inquiring into the affair, and after reading the  
provocation, deigning to grant a pardon to the  
homicide. "Our emperor is mercy itself," he  
replied; "but hundreds of documents are  
brought to him to sign every day, and time  
would not allow him to read them all. This  
will probably not be put before him till he has  
looked through eighty or ninety others first." Poor  
Lisa was too simple-hearted to think it  
strange that a human life should depend on  
whether a sentence of death was near the top or  
the bottom of a pile of official papers, or on  
whether the emperor was too tired or too busy  
to peruse them. She was no heroine like her  
Siberian, and had no idea of proceeding on foot  
to St. Petersburg to present a petition to the  
emperor in person; she only thought now of  
earning enough money to buy a little opium,  
for the victim to stupefy himself while he under-  
went his frightful punishment, for that was per-  
mitted; and afterwards her small savings would  
be devoted to a mass for his soul. The priest  
with some difficulty obtained an admission for  
her into the prison, where her brother sat in his  
cell chained by the leg to a ring in the wall; a  
bed of damp straw to lie upon; a picher of  
water and a small piece of black bread by his  
side: the picture of dogged resignation or hope-  
lessness, with no prospect before him but an  
agonising death.